

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 19, 2003

Chairman Tim Lambert called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Approval for Minutes from October 2003 Meeting

- October meeting minutes were approved with the following changes:
 - 1) Commissioner Freeland corrected wording under Maryland Farm Bureau Report to the Farm Bureau have been receiving higher dollar value claims for disbursement to farmers on nursery crops, scrubs, and etc. that cost the farmers more money.
 - 2) Commissioner Dollar emphasized the importance of adding Mr. Bob Long's point on CREP dollars and the potential benefit to species such as turkey and quail.

Maryland Farm Bureau Report

- Presentation by Mr. Kurt H. Fuchs, Maryland Farm Bureau Representative
- The Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) started receiving reports on crop damages due to deer. Some of the MFB staff met with Director Paul A. Peditto to discuss the problems with the issuance of deer depredation permits. The benefits of the new software will resolve majority of the problems.
- The Maryland Farm Bureau meets December 7th through December 10th for their 88th Annual Meeting.
 - 1) Wildlife issues continue to be a top priority issue for MFB.
 - 2) Nutria Management will be added to the program.
 - 3) MFB supports a black bear hunt. Farmers have received significant amount of damages to their crops as a result of bears. MFB will support reducing the size of the black bear population.
 - 4) MFB has received reports of goose damages. There are some losses especially in the lower Eastern Shore area.

Teaming With Wildlife Report

- Presentation by Glenn Therres, Associate Director and Commissioner Lowell Adams
- Teaming With Wildlife (TWW) was established to provide long-term funding for state fish and wildlife agencies.... from non-traditional sources.
 - 1) TWW drew attention to the need to institute funding to prevent species from becoming endangered.
 - 2) In the last four years, Congress approved funding from General Treasury dollars for non-game activities.
 - 3) Commissioners are encouraged to lobby Congress to allocate funding for non-game activities.
- Maryland Coalition is compiled of variety of organizations, members, businesses, and individuals.
 - 1) Mr. Tom Franklin from the Wildlife Society is the President for the Maryland Coalition. Also, Mr. Franklin is involved with the national TWW.
 - 2) Mr. Therres handed out the draft MOU between DNR and Maryland TWW Coalition [Attachment A]. MD TWW Coalition will be meeting with Secretary Franks in January to lobby his approval for the new MD TWW Coalition MOU.
 - 3) Mr. Therres handed out the MD TWW Report – 2003 [Attachment B].
 - 4) TWW Report – 2003 outlined how the funds were used. The formula is based on state population total and land area (2/3 state population and 1/3 state land size).
 - 5) Most projects take at least 1½ years to complete or more. The Wildlife Conservation & Restoration Program funded projects of species that have not received attention through the traditional funding sources.
 - (a) Congress changed the name of the Wildlife Conservation & Restoration Program to State Wildlife Grants, and restricted the usage of these funds for species of greatest conservation need. These funds could be use for environmental education and wildlife related recreational activities.
 - (b) The dollar amount listed on [Attachment B] is the dollar amount that Maryland received. Projects listed in fiscal year 2002 are projects that the State is currently working on. President Bush signed the fiscal year 2004 Budget Bill.
- Maryland is obligated to produce by October 2005 a comprehensive Wildlife Diversity Plan to address the needs of species with greatest conservation concern. DNR started to develop this plan by contracting with the University of Maryland of Eastern Shore and a consulting firm to help assist DNR to develop Comprehensive Wildlife Diversity Plan. The plan will focus on natural communities, individual species, and habitat.
- Commissioner Lowell Adams outlined the Commission involvement with TWW.
 - 1) For years, the Commissioners discussed the need to have more money allocated to DNR.
 - 2) Commissioners have written letters to past Governors.

- (a) This process have brought significant amount of money to the State (DNR).
 - (b) WAC has been actively involved with the Maryland Coalition.
- 3) Commissioners were asked to continue communicating with Congress for additional funding.
- 4) Next summer, Commissioner Lowell Adams term will end as a member on the Maryland Coalition and a new member will to be elected.
- Questions and Answers
 - 1) Commissioner Gregory asked how does the Department measure the success of the projects and how does the Department strategize and identifies future projects.
 - (a) Heritage staff will assess what data already collected about species at risk.
 - (b) After gathering the data, the Heritage staff will analyze the data to verify that staff members are on the right track.
 - (c) There are species that staff members have little information on; therefore, there is a need to identify these species as part of the assessment.
 - (d) Staff members will develop an evaluation monitoring system.
 - 2) Commissioner Gregory and Commissioner Lamp emphasized the need to develop an outcome assessment for each project.
 - (a) Group discussed potential for problems in not having outcome assessment for each project.
 - (b) Assistant Secretary Mike Slattery explained that the Service would not allocate more money to Maryland if the Department failed to fulfill their obligations.
 - (c) Commissioners received updates on the Natural Heritage Program, as listed on the WAC Working Agenda. In the near future, the Commissioners will receive and are expected to review the draft 2004 WAC Working Agenda. Staff will make available an outcome assessment on those projects that are done.
 - (d) Some animals are held in a public trust; as a result, they are protected under the law. We have different situations that require different solutions.

Fur Resources Advisory Committee Report

- Fur Resources Advisory Committee Report was deferred to 2004 WAC meeting.
- Director Peditto highlighted a few items:
 - 1) Bow Hunter Survey was mailed to 6,000 bow hunters. The Survey was provided on the website for hunters to download. The Game Program received 1,500 responses from hunters.
 - 2) The Survey will provide additional information on the furbearer population estimates.
 - 3) Assistant Secretary Mike Slattery and Director Paul A. Peditto met with the Maryland Association of Wildlife Conservation-MAWC (fox chasers).
 - (a) MAWC has an interest in improving the collection of furbearer species population data, specifically coyotes and foxes.
 - (b) The Board donated money to the WHS to assist with sending out more surveys. This will provide more data to help WHS to make scientific based decisions.
 - 4) The new Fur Bearer User Bill will likely be presented during the 2004 General Assembly. No significant revenue will be obtained from this bill.

State Forest and Park Service Update

- 5) No Report

Natural Resources Police Update

- Sergeant Richardson should be added to Wildlife Advisory Commission list to receive the minutes. Only 10-percent of NRP officers have email so distribution of information is difficult at times.
- Sergeant Richardson provided summary of NRP activity from 10/27 – 11/16 [Attachment C].
 - 1) Crossbow incident – The key factor is hunter safety. NRP educate students to remember to treat every gun, archery equipment, crossbow as a loaded instrument.
 - 2) It is law that requires a hunter under the age of sixteen must be supervised on Youth Day.
 - 3) Hunter Safety Courses have a segment on how to load and unload a crossbow safely.
 - 4) Since 1977, when hunter safety was implemented hunting incidents were reduce dramatically.

Budget Update

- Presentation by Mike Slattery, Assistant Secretary of Forest, Parks, Fisheries and Wildlife
- The Department foresees further cuts in the near future.
 - 1) The Units will be involved in how the cuts will be made.
 - 2) The Department is reviewing ways to create new revenue.
 - 3) The Department has a working group to figure out how to allocate manpower and funding resources as a collective unit.
 - (a) The Department will be increasing timber harvest on State lands. This could be done in a responsible matter.
 - (b) A Departmental Bill to allow WHS the authority to establish service fee for non-hunting activities on WMAs. Non-consumption users enjoy natural resources on WMAs as well as hunters. Group discussion ensued regarding the non-consumptive users having to pay a fee to use public lands. Comments were made that hunters are also taxpayers, who are contributing to these resources and so should the non-consumption users. In the end, this would preserve Maryland's wildlife and natural resources.
 - (c) Commissioner Gregory offered a few volunteer hours to help the Department to profit from timber harvest.

Old Business

- Rescheduled the discussion of a WAC subcommittee on urban wildlife issues for the 2004 WAC Working Agenda.
 - 1) Commissioner Lamp will email the changes to the Commissioners by the February meeting.
 - 2) Director Peditto will provide a summary of topics for the 2004 General Assembly to be included in the mailing of the November WAC Minutes and February Agenda.

New Business

- Commissioner Lamp handed out the Fund Facts "Living with Deer."
- The Sun Paper had an article on lobbying support for seizing hunting opportunities for children, changing the law to not allow children to hunt under the age of sixteen. The Fund for Animals is using the crossbow incident with a 10-year old child to gather support for this recommendation.
- The duck blinds on the Patuxent River have been staked but WHS is waiting for reimbursement from FEMA to replace the blinds.
- Director Peditto reminded the Commissioners that the next WAC meeting will be held in February 2004.
 - (a) Governor Ehrlich has appointed new members to the Wildlife Advisory Commission.
 - (b) Commissioner Freeland and Commissioner King's terms ended in 2003.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Attendance

Members:	L. Adams, C. Dollar, W. Freeland, R. Gregory, M. King, T. Lambert, J. Lamp,
Guests:	K. Fuchs
Staff:	B. Beyer, S. Bittner, B. King, P. Jayne, P. Peditto, S. Richardson, M. Slattery, T. Spencer, G. Therres
Absent:	G. Fratz, C. Garner, K. Jones